

From: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US
Sent: 1/6/2012 3:03:28 PM

To: Shawn Garvin/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; William Early/R3/USEPA/US; Ron Borsellino/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Betsaida Alcantara/DC/USEPA/US@EPA; Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Joan Schafer/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; David Sternberg/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Dennis Carney/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Michael Kulik/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Daniel Ryan/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Michael DAndrea/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Jennie Saxe/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Stacie Driscoll/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Kathy Hodgkiss/R3/USEPA/US@EPA

CC:
Subject: Reuters (1-6) US may truck water to Pa residents near fracking site

US may truck water to Pa residents near fracking site

06 Jan 2012 19:45

Source: reuters // Reuters

By Edward McAllister and Timothy Gardner

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, Jan 6 (Reuters) - Federal regulators are considering trucking fresh water to households in a Pennsylvania town where residents say wells have been polluted by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, for natural gas.

Only a month after declaring water in Dimock, Pennsylvania, was safe to drink, the Environmental Protection Agency has once again become concerned about supplies. Dimock residents recently supplied to the EPA hundreds of pages of data that link water pollution to fracking.

Two residents of Dimock, a town of some 1,400 in the northeast corner of Pennsylvania, told Reuters that the EPA said water would be delivered on Friday, but the agency indicated it was still considering the issue.

"No decision has been made by EPA to provide alternate sources of water," an EPA spokeswoman said in an email on Friday. She added that the agency was trying to understand the situation in Dimock where state regulators recently halted deliveries of fresh water.

If the EPA delivers water to the village, it would be the clearest sign yet regulators are concerned about the effect of drilling on drinking water in Dimock.

Dimock may become pivotal in a national debate about the environmental impact of fracking, the drilling technique that could unlock decades' worth of natural gas trapped in shale deposits, but which environmentalists say contaminates water supplies.

On Thursday the EPA said it is now considering doing its own tests on drinking water there after the evidence provided by residents suggested that it could be more polluted than originally thought.

Dimock residents began complaining of cloudy, foul-smelling water in 2008 after Cabot Oil & Gas Corp began fracking, which involves injecting chemical-laced water and sand into wells to release gas in shale rock deep below the surface.

Environmentalists say fracking pollutes fresh water as fluids seep from drilling wells into aquifers and other supply sources.

Cabot had trucked water to a dozen Dimock households for three years until November when state regulators agreed it could stop. Now residents are onto the last of their water. Some are using pondwater for showers.

As fracking increases in the United States and contributes to an energy boom, the EPA is conducting a national study to determine its impacts.

A recent EPA draft report showed that harmful chemicals from fracking fluids were likely present in a Wyoming aquifer near the town of Pavillion.

Industry denies that fracking, which is being done across the country, poses a threat to drinking water. (Reporting By Edward McAllister in New York and Timothy Gardner in Washington; editing by Jim Marshall)

Roy Seneca
EPA Region 3 Press Officer
Office of Public Affairs
seneca.roy@epa.gov
(215) 814-5567